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Highlights: 1985 Recent College Graduates Survey

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HIGHLIGHTS

In 1985, the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics (CES) conducted a survey of college graduates who received a bachelor's or master's degree between July 1, 1983, and June 30, 1984. This was the fourth survey in the series since 1976. The nationally representative sample of about 16,000 bachelor's degree recipients and 2,000 master's degree recipients was selected from about 400 U.S. colleges and universities. The overall response rate was 78 percent. The 1985 survey provides data on the education and employment of 1983-84 degree recipients a year after graduation. It also provides detailed data on persons newly qualified to teach and on beginning teachers.

The following are a number of highlights chosen from the data to illustrate the type of information collected in this study, and some of the major results.

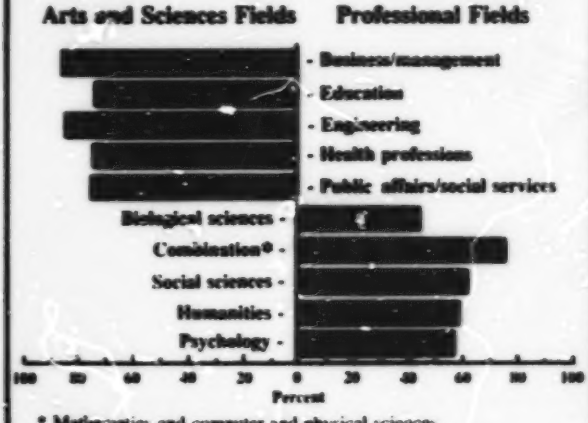
Employment

- Nearly 85 percent of all bachelor's degree recipients were employed full-time (73 percent) or part-time (12 percent) 1 year after graduation. Approximately 12 percent were not employed and not looking for work, while 3 percent were unemployed but looking for work. About 23 percent of bachelor's degree recipients were enrolled in a postsecondary institution.
- Of the master's degree recipients graduated in 1983-84, 80 percent were employed full-time 1 year later; about 10 percent were employed part-time; nearly 8 percent were not employed and not looking for work; and 2 percent were unemployed but looking for work.
- Full-time employment rates were higher for bachelor's degree recipients who majored in business/management and engineering. They were lower for graduates who majored in the biological sciences and psychology. Overall, full-time employment rates were best for graduates who majored in a professional field,[1] with at least 73 percent of

[1] Professional fields comprise business/management, education, engineering, health professional, public affairs/social services

graduates employed full-time in 1985. Only 61 percent of graduates who majored in arts and sciences [2] were employed full-time (figure 1).

Figure 1. — Percent of bachelor's degree recipients employed full-time, by major field of study



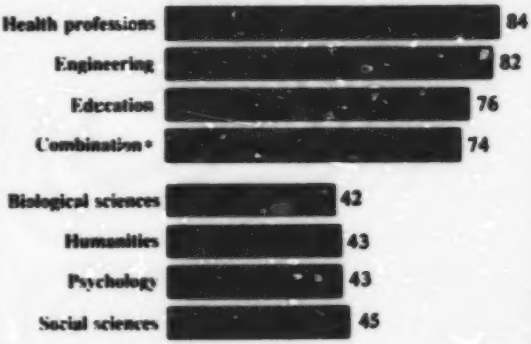
* Mathematics and computer and physical sciences.

Types of Jobs

- Of bachelor's degree recipients working full- or part-time in 1985, approximately 59 percent held professional, managerial, or technical jobs. The highest percentage of these jobs filled by any recent graduates were filled by those in the health professions (figure 2). Graduates in the biological sciences held the lowest percentage, but nearly 34 percent reported that they were not looking for work in 1985, primarily because they were pursuing another degree. About 41 percent of working bachelor's recipients held nonprofessional, nonmanagerial, or nontechnical jobs.
- Of all employed bachelor's degree recipients, 22 percent reported that the jobs they held 1 year after graduation were not related to their major field of

[2] Arts and science fields comprise biological sciences, combination (math, computer and physical sciences), social sciences, humanities, psychology.

Figure 2. — Percent of bachelor's degree recipients employed full-time or part-time in a professional, managerial, or technical job, by major field of study



* Mathematics and computer and physical sciences.

study. Approximately 40 percent of these graduates said they could not find a job in their major field of study. Bachelor's degree recipients in the fields of social science, humanities, and psychology had the highest proportions of graduates working outside their field of training: 48 percent, 43 percent, and 42 percent respectively.

- Approximately 42 percent of all employed bachelor's degree recipients felt their jobs had definite career potential, while 25 percent felt that their jobs had possible career potential. However, another 33 percent considered their present jobs as temporary and would change jobs for better opportunities.

Starting Salaries

- The average annual starting salary for bachelor's degree recipients employed full-time in professional, managerial, or technical jobs was $19,000. Among all major fields of study, full-time employment opportunities and salaries for bachelor's degree recipients were best for those who majored in engineering ($26,000), computer sciences ($25,000), and the health professions ($21,000). Other major fields of study that paid bachelor's degree recipients working full-time more than a $20,000-per-year starting salary were the biological

and physical sciences, and mathematics. At the low end of the wage scale were social workers, who earned about $13,000. Bachelor's graduates in nonprofessional, nonmanagerial, or nontechnical jobs, such as clerical and laborer positions, received starting salaries around $14,000 per year.

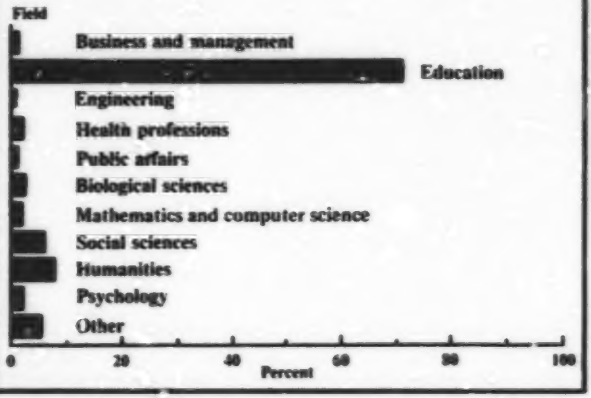
Comparisons by Sex

- Males outnumbered females in the number of bachelor's degrees earned in engineering. Eighty-eight percent of the graduates in engineering were males, whereas only 12 percent were females. In the health professions, however, females dominated the field with 84 percent of bachelor's degrees compared with 16 percent awarded to males.
- Fifty-one percent of all bachelor's degree recipients were females, but males continued to receive better starting salaries, reporting an overall full-time average annual salary of approximately $20,000 as compared to about $16,000 for females. This difference may be partially explained by differences in the major fields of male and female bachelor's degree recipients. For example, the domination of males in engineering and the high salaries for engineers contributed to the salary differential.
- Male and female bachelor's degree recipients were about the same age and had the same proportion of married recipients 1 year after graduation. Both reported an average age of 26 years, and about 29 percent reported being married in 1985.

Newly Qualified Teachers

- Approximately 97,000 1983-84 bachelor's degree recipients were classified as newly qualified to teach in 1985, representing more than 10 percent of the total graduating class. Seventy-one percent of all newly qualified teachers had majored in education. Other major fields that contributed newly qualified teachers in relatively large proportions were the humanities and social sciences. Bachelor's degree recipients in engineering and public affairs/social services contributed the lowest proportion of newly qualified teachers (figure 3).
- One year after graduation, 93 percent of all newly qualified teachers were employed, either full-time

Figure 3. — Percent of bachelor's degree recipients who were newly qualified teachers, by major field of study



(74 percent) or part-time (19 percent). Seven percent were not employed: 5 percent were not looking for work, while 2 percent were unemployed but looking for work.

- Of those newly qualified teachers employed in 1985, 63 percent were teachers in elementary or secondary schools, while 4 percent were college teachers. The proportions of newly qualified teachers in occupations outside of teaching ranged from a high of 3 percent in business to a low of 0.08 percent in mathematics and science professions.
- The average annual starting salary of bachelor's degree recipients who became new teachers in 1985 was about $14,000.
- Female new teachers outnumbered male new teachers by a ratio of 3 to 1. The overall average annual starting salary of all male bachelor's degree recipients classified as newly qualified to teach was approximately $1,700 more than females who were newly qualified to teach.

Additional reports generated from the Recent College Graduates Survey data base will be forthcoming. For additional information about the survey, contact Joanell Porter, Special Surveys and Analysis Branch, Postsecondary Education Statistics Division, Center for Education Statistics, (202) 626-9041.

The computer tape containing all survey information in a raw data EBCDIC format is available.[3] Another file which will be available in the near future is a Statistical Analysis System (SAS) data file and will contain, in addition to RCG survey responses, a large number of variables from the 1983-84 CES-HEGIS Institutional Characteristics file which describe the institutions from which the degree recipients graduated.

[3] For information on how to obtain the tape, write to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Information Systems and Media Services, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20208-1327.